

Indiana Department of Correction Rebuilds Lives Through Education

Media Contact:

Department of Correction

Java Ahmed

(317) 234-1693

E-mail: jahmed@doc.in.gov

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Commissioner J. David Donahue



Commencement at Northeast Juvenile: Jonathon Ray addresses NEJCF graduates.

Fort Wayne, Indiana - On Thursday, March 15, 2007, the Northeast Juvenile Correctional Facility, a treatment facility operated by the Indiana Department of Correction, held its first commencement ceremony for 12 high school graduates. The graduates successfully completed the General Education Development (GED) test administered under the direction of the Department of Education. Jonathon Ray, President of the Fort Wayne Urban League, spoke to the graduates reminding them that it is never to late to start over and asking them to repeat the mantra, "If it's to be, it's up to me."

The facility school, Northeast Junior/Senior High School, has graduated 133 students since the facility moved to its present location in 2001. This commencement was the first held at the facility to recognize and celebrate the students' achievements. Northeast Jr./Sr. High School is recognized by the Indiana Department of Education and accredited by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement as a special purpose school. All students are required to attend junior or high school classes for credit that transfer to their community schools, or to prepare for their GED. Since 2001, 84% of students at Northeast taking the GED have successfully passed and received state certification. On admission, students' average test scores are 2 grade levels below their age. This initial performance level and the troubles that landed these youth in a correctional facility increase the significance of their achievements.

Family members from across the state came to join in the commencement ceremonies and show their support. "This is a life changing accomplishment for these young men," said facility superintendent David Hartzler. "Education is a major key to success after returning to the community and we are excited by the progress and success demonstrated by these graduates."

Department of Correction Commissioner J. David Donahue also applauded the students' success. "Education, including special education services, is critical to the Department of Correction's mission to prepare these youth for re-entry into the community. Their success is a testament to their hard work and the professionalism and diligence of the institutional teachers in the facility."

Northeast plans to hold commencement ceremonies periodically each year to accommodate the year-round schedule of the educational program. Northeast is located in Venture Park in northwest Fort Wayne and provides educational and other treatment services for male juveniles committed by juvenile courts from all Indiana counties.

Media Contacts:

Eric Anthony, NEJ Public Information Officer,
(260) 497-7233 , ext 111
eanthony@doc.in.gov

About The Department of Correction

The Department employs over 8,000 employees and houses 24,000 adult and juveniles in 32 facilities, ranging from minimum to maximum custody, prison camps, juvenile facilities and work release centers. The Department's home page on the Internet can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection>. The Department's Re-entry Site can be found: <http://www.reentry.in.gov>.